State were constitutional Rulers who always acted only on the specific recommendations of the Dewan. But still the absence of responsible Government was keenly felt by the people. It was now many years since the people had begun to agitate through their representative institutions and the newspapers of the country for the establishment of responsible government, but without any effect. Evidently the Head of the Administration was unwilling to surrender to the people the unfettered powers and privileges now enjoyed by him. Here all responsibilities were vested in the Dewan. It was true that there was a Legislative Council in the State, which had been in existence for the last 43 years. But its powers were limited. The Dewan was the President. Many important subjects were kept out of the purview of the Council. The Government were not bound to accept the recommendations of the Council. The Dewan was free to disregard the resolutions of the Council totally and make and unmake rules as he pleased. There would be some radical change in the system of administration in British India. The people there were about to be granted full self-government. It was a great pity that Travancore, which was far advanced than British India in many respects, was denied such a privilege. It was the earnest and unanimous desire of the people that an Executive Council, responsible to the Legislature, and composed of members elected by the Legislative Council and the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly should be established in the country at an early date. Every attempt should be made for the early introduction of responsible Government in the State, in conformity with the wishes of the people.

187. Administrative Reforms.

MR. S. JANARDHANAN NAIR (*Nedumangad taluk,*), speaking in Malayalam, first expressed the feelings of thankfulness of the people of Travancore in general and of the citizens of Nedumangad taluk in particular, towards Her Highness the Maha Rani Regent for so readily responding to the wishes of the people in appointing only the sons of the soil as Dewans in the State. He also thanked the Dewan for giving a patient hearing to the representations made by the members of the Assembly and requested him to bestow greater attention to the needs of the country in the light of those representations. He also presented a memorial signed by the members of the Assembly, requesting that, in view of the settlement arrived in British India as a result of the Irwin-Gandhi agreement, the prosecution against the *Bhrijabharatam* newspaper for sedition, should be withdrawn immediately.

Passing on to his subject, the member first spoke about unemployment and poverty in the State, their causes and the remedies therefor. The costly method of the present system of education was one of the main causes. Primary education, though free in the State, put the parents to much unnecessary expenditure towards the purchase of text books and note books. The evil should be remedied. The system of education, which was purely literary, was faulty, in as much as it killed the pupils' imagination, dwarfed their intellect and ruined their

physique. It incapacitated the young generation for any useful, noble and patriotic works. To remedy the evil, technical and vocational education should be introduced.

The defective policy of the Government in the matter of registry of land was another important cause. The registry of *puduval* lands in big blocks in the name of particular individuals or to foreigners was undesirable. The *puduval* lands should be divided into small blocks of five acres and given in registry. The wet lands (swampy areas) within the reserved forests should also be made available for registry and should be similarly assigned away. The policy of auctioning away the *puduval* lands should be discontinued. Larger amounts should be made available for issue of agricultural loans, at a lower rate of interest and for longer periods. Only the *bonafide* agriculturists should be allowed to have the benefit of the loans. At least Rs. 25,000 should be allotted for each taluk. Measures should be taken for the improvement of the economic condition of the agriculturists of the country and for affording better facilities for agricultural operations. Better attention should be bestowed on minor irrigation works. Land Mortgage Banks, at least one for each taluk, should be started. Trade Agents and commercial agents should be appointed in the big cities in Europe, America and Japan to find out proper markets for the local products and thereby encourage trade and industry in the State. A large sum should be invested in the Central Co-operative Bank, to be issued as loans to the agriculturists through the Co-operative Societies in moffusil centres. The working of the co-operative societies in the State should be made more efficient and useful by raising the status of the Registrar, and by increasing the number of Supervisors and Inspectors.

The Industries Department of the State was not being efficiently worked. No new industries were found out, nor were the existing industries properly encouraged. There was sufficient scope and potential capacity for the people to start new industries, provided the Government took the initiative in the matter and rendered the necessary financial help. The Government should start, in the different centres in the State, factories for the manufacture of soap, candle, button, biscuits, glass, matches, etc. Weaving and dyeing factories should also be opened. Weaving and spinning and the manufacture of *khadi* should be introduced in schools and jails. Weaving and spinning should be made compulsory in all English and vernacular schools. Cultivation of cotton should be encouraged. So far as clothing was concerned, the State should be made self-sufficient.

Indirect taxation, such as toll and market collections, should be discontinued. If that was not possible, at least the rates should be reduced and the work of collecting the tolls should be entrusted to a separate department, after discontinuing the present practice of auctioning away the tolls and markets to contractors.

The number as well as the salaries of the higher officers should be reduced. The low pay of the subordinate service, such as of the

Peons, Constables, Sepoys, Vernacular school teachers, *pakuthi* staff, and the Copyists in courts and *cutcherries* should be enhanced. The minimum pay in public service should be fixed at Rs. 15 per mensem. The low pay of the subordinate staff fostered corruption. Perhaps the Government would plead want of funds for the purpose. To remedy this, besides reducing substantially the salary of the highly paid officers, the Government could abolish many unnessary posts and reduce the number of high-paid officers. The number of Dewan Peishkars, including the Devicolam Commissioner, could be reduced to two. There would be a substantial saving by the consequential abolition of their respective office staff also. Similarly, the Division Assistants could be reduced to four. The post of the Income Tax Inspectors could also be done away with. The Assistant Superintendents of Police had no work worth mentioning and they had no responsibilty. The work of supervision could be efficiently conducted by the District Superintendents of Police. Hence the posts of the Assistant Superintendents of Police could be conveniently abolished. The work of Assistant Excise Commissioners consisted in conducting inspections. That could be done by a Deputy Commissioner to be appointed. The Assistant Excise Commissioner on duty in the Excise Commissioner's office should be retained, to be appointed as the Deputy Commissioner and the post of the remaining Assistant Excise Commissioners could be abolished. Similarly, the places of the Assistant Devaswom Commissioners and the Assistant Inspectors and Inspectresses of Schools should be abolished. A very large amount could also be saved by effecting substantial reductions in the pay of the high officers of the State. The Dewan's pay could be reduced to Rs. 1,500, the Land Revenue Commissioner's pay to Rs. 700, and the pay of the Dewan Peishkars, the Police Commissioner, the Excise Commissioner and the Conservator of Forests to Rs. 500 each. The pay of the Chief Justice could be reduced to Rs. 1,000 and of the Puisne Judges, the Chief Secretary to the Government and the Director of Public Instruction to Rs. 700. The Principals of the various Colleges should be given only Rs. 600 and the Law College Principal Rs. 700. The Chief Engineer's pay could be reduced Rs. 1,000 ; and the services of all except two Executive Engineers and four Assistant Engineers could also be dispensed with.

The member next suggested that salt should be allowed to be manufactured free. That would be a source of income to the poor people. The State should be made self-sufficient so far as salt was concerned ; and the import of salt from Bombay and Tuticorin should be discontinued. The free cultivation of tobacco, *ganja* and other forest products should be allowed. Arrack and toddy shops as well as tapping should be abolished. Jaggery factories should be established and licenses should be issued to tap for jaggery. The license fees realised from them would make up for the loss which would be sustained by the Government by abolishing the "drink evil" in the State. The

proposed re-settlement of the State should be abandoned, as it would be ruinous to the people.

The member next spoke about the necessity for the establishment of responsible government in the country. The Executive should be made responsible to the Legislature. The Judiciary should be kept strictly independent. Till the establishment of responsible government, as a temporary measure, an Executive Council should be established; and the Legislative Council and the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly should be reformed. In regard to the Legislative Council, universal adult franchise should be granted. Each taluk should be empowered to return at least one member and special constituencies should be established for the sake of minority and unrepresented communities. The members of the Executive Council should be elected from the Legislative Council. The Council should have an elected President and all members should be empowered to ask supplementary questions. There should be absolute privilege of speech. The Assembly should be given a statutory basis; the period of membership should be extended to three years; and the Assembly should be convoked at least twice a year. The members should be empowered to discuss the annual budget and pass resolutions. They should have the right to reply.

The member next urged the need for abolition of capital punishment. Awarding of capital punishment was inhuman and barbarous, especially in a Hindu State like Travancore, where the Ruler firmly believed in *Karma* theory. The benign Sovereign who considered the slaughter of animals in temples as inhuman should consider the slaughter of human beings as most inhuman.

A University should be started for Travancore. The best site for the location of the University was the Trivandrum beach.

The member finally urged the necessity for the issue of the District Court and the High Court *Sanads* to second grade Pleaders and District Court Pleaders of standing and practice and for their appointment as Stationary Magistrates, Prosecuting Inspectors, Police and Excise Inspectors, Sub-Registrars and Range Officers. The member cited instances of pleaders, both in and outside Travancore, who had risen to very high positions at the Bar. The member also suggested that if necessary a competitive examination or a Selection Board or a special committee may be constituted for the selection and granting of *Sanads* for the High Court as well as for the recruitment of the first and second grade Pleaders as Stationary Magistrates, Police Inspectors etc. At present the condition of the Pleaders in the State was worse than that of women in Travancore. Hence the Government should do their best to improve their lot in the State.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr Janardanan Nair Apart from the question of Assembly and Legislative Council reform on which others will also speak and to which I have promised a joint reply, there are several points you have raised. The only thing to be said is

that there are too many points. Many of these points have been raised by one member or another already.

The last point that you have raised about the second grade Pleaders being given *Sanads* to practise in the High Court is very fantastic as you yourself will admit. But perhaps there is nothing wrong in principle, in the theory you started with. A person who has passed the S. S. L. C. might sit for a Law Examination with those who are graduates and take his chance with them. But as long as that is not the principle here, the suggestion that you made must be declared to be fantastic.

The other points will be considerd by Government and the question of reform of the Assembly will be dealt with after the other members also speak.

188. Representative Institutions and Responsible Government in Travancore.

MR. M. KESAVA MENON GOVINDA MENON (*Ambalapuzha taluk, Group II*) said that, from the very dawn of history, Travancore occupied a conspicuous position among the South Indian States. With her enlightenment, her up-to-date machinery of Government, her increasing population and an equally increasing income, the State might appear to be an ideal one to an outsider. The Dewan, in his Opening Address to the Assembly, had declared that the State had made remarkable progress in a variety of directions. But with the present poverty, unemployment, deterioration of industry, distress and famine, it was doubtful how far the Dewan's opinion could be endorsed. The unsympathetic and haphazard administrative policy of an unbroken galaxy of foreign Dewans, together with the irresponsible behaviour of the heads of departments towards the public and their utter disregard of public opinion, had impoverished the State and made the people thoroughly discontented. With Travancore, like any other Native State, responsible Government had become a necessity. The promulgation of the Press Regulation, the Police excesses at the so-called students' strike and in connection with the temperance movement at Shertallai showed clearly the attitude of the Government towards popular opinion and public welfare. In spite of repeated requests from the public as well as from the representatives of the people in the Assembly and in the Legislative Council, the Government were not prepared to take the necessary steps to bring to book the actual culprits who tarnished the name of the Government in the Shertallai muddle. The Press Regulation only proclaimed to the world in unmistakable terms the desperate attempt of an inefficient Government to check the growth of national consciousness in the people and to suppress the legitimate voice of disapprobation against the high-handedness of the Government. It was for the present Dewan, a son of the soil, to remove this objectionable Regulation from the pages of the Statute Book.